

MINUTES
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS
OF THE ELEVENTH
AMERICAN CONVENTION
FOR PROMOTING THE
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY
AND
IMPROVING THE CONDITION
OF THE
AFRICAN RACE:

ASSEMBLED AT
PHILADELPHIA,

ON THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF JANUARY, ONE THOUSAND EIGHT
HUNDRED AND SIX, AND CONTINUED BY ADJOURNMENTS
UNTIL THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE
SAME MONTH, INCLUSIVE.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY KIMBER, CONRAD, AND CO.

1806.

MINUTES
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS
OF THE ELEVENTH
AMERICAN CONVENTION
FOR PROMOTING THE
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY, &c.

SELECT COUNCIL CHAMBER.

Philadelphia, January 13th, 1806.

THIS being the day appointed by the Constitution for the meeting of the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, &c. a number of Delegates from several Abolition Societies in the United States attended, and produced their credentials; by which it appears the following persons have been appointed to represent their respective Societies in this Convention, viz. from

New-York.....Egbert Benson,
Thomas Eddy,
Rudolph Bunner,
Thomas Franklin,
Christopher M. Slocum,
Jacob Valentine,

Benjamin Clark.
 John Onderdonk,
 Adrian Hegeman,
 Robert C. Cornell.

New-Jersey.....John Shotwell,
 Gershom Craft,
 John Griscom,
 William Allinson,
 Amos Cooper,
 Paul Cooper,
 Clement Hall.

Pennsylvania....Timothy Paxson,
 George Williams,
 Benjamin Williams,
 Thomas P. Cope,
 Jacob S. Waln, jun.
 Joseph R. Jenks,
 Isaac T. Hopper.

Delaware.....Allen M'Lane,
 Joseph Bringhamst, jun.
 William Pryce,
 Cyrus Newlin.

The Delegates present were....Christopher M. Slocum, Jacob Valentine, John Onderdonk, Adrian Hegeman, Robert C. Cornell, John Griscom, William Allinson, Gershom Craft, Amos Cooper, Timothy Paxson, Thomas P. Cope, Joseph R. Jenks, Isaac T. Hopper, Benjamin Williams, Jacob S. Waln, jun. George Williams, Allen M'Lane, Joseph Bringhamst, jun. William Pryce.

The Convention proceeded to the choice of Officers, when the following persons were duly elected, viz.

GERSHOM CRAFT.....PRESIDENT.
 JACOB S. WALN, jun....SECRETARY.
 THOMAS P. COPE.....TREASURER.

John Rafield was appointed door-keeper.

Communications from the Abolition Societies of New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Providence (R. I.) were received and read, as follows :.....

To the Convention of Delegates, from the several Abolition Societies in the United States, to be held at Philadelphia, on the 13th day of January, 1806.

WE received with pleasure your last communication, in conjunction with your address to the people of colour; the latter we have caused to be carefully distributed....for the former, we return you our sincere thanks. Moved by the free spirit of Christianity, which extends an universal grace to all, and touched with an ardent desire of doing essential service to our country, by opposing in every possible way, consistent with law and justice, the destructive traffic in slaves, we trust we shall never be discouraged by difficulty, or deterred by danger : and proceeding with tempered zeal and cautious diligence, we hope (perhaps with too much confidence) yet to perceive rights and privileges really, and not nominally, common; and our country freed from the bitter reproach of confining to a part, what the nature of civil society equally demands for all.

Though our standing committee have diligently laboured in the discharge of their duties, and have been successful in liberating many from illegal bondage, we have, nevertheless, cause to regret, that the secrecy and caution which the persons

employed in kidnapping have observed, has defeated their endeavours to detect their arts, and bring to punishment their crimes. The extreme difficulty of obtaining legal proof of this offence, arises, partly from the nature of the subject, and partly from the want of agents in the southern states to collect intelligence, which may either afford or lead to the discovery of proper testimony. We therefore submit this subject to the discretion of the Convention, and from our conviction that the system is carried on to an alarming degree, we think it merits their particular attention. It is with pleasure we announce to the Convention, that we have obtained a judgment versus Philip M. Topham, to the amount of sixteen thousand dollars, for an offence against the act of the United States prohibiting the employment of American vessels in the transportation of slaves. We think it not improper here to observe, that the defendant, in this suit, is a native of Rhode Island, and to suggest to the Convention the necessity of adopting some measure, either radical or palliative, for the suppression or restriction of the slave-trade in that state, where it is pursued as a principal branch of commerce, in defiance of the laws of the Union, and in contempt of the principles of humanity, without the fear of detection, or the veil of secrecy. Nor is this conduct only marked by the open violation of law, but every outrage and odium are abundantly heaped upon those friends of humanity, who have the boldness to hint disapprobation of the avaricious speculations in this unhallowed path to riches.

The School under our superintendence, is in an increasing state of prosperity, equal, if not superior, in the number of pupils, to any private seminary for the instruction of whites in this populous

city. It at present consists of about one hundred scholars, under the direction of the same man of colour who for some years past has had the superintendence of it. As from education the morals and manners receive their deepest tincture, we are the more solicitous upon this important object of our institution, and expect by the sure test of experience, to evince its great utility in forming the habits to industry, and the manners to gentleness. Though the progress of literary advancement of the people of colour, is greatest in this city (and of its state here only, we are accurately informed) yet from all sources of information we have been able to discover, we think it proportionably improving throughout the state: of their moral condition, though absolutely it may be worse than the lowest order of the native whites, yet when we regard their opportunities of instruction, and their few motives to exertion, we rather wonder they are not more depraved, than admire at their corruption; but from the growing prevalence of their religious tendencies, we have every reasonable ground to hope for a radical and permanent improvement in their state of morals. We perceive with pleasure, that the Acting Committee of the Convention have been requested to open a correspondence with the London committee of the society for the Abolition of the Slave-trade: acting as we do, from no interested views, nor influenced by national prejudices, we commend this liberal and comprehensive scheme, as striking at the root of the evil, and the extirpation of the vice. The inhibition of the traffic on the part of England, would not only prevent the addition of future victims, but improve the condition of her present stock; for the sole remaining mean of preserving a quantity sufficient for the purpose of colonial agriculture, will then be

to increase the number by internal population ; and that can only be done by relaxing the labours and extending the privileges of the slaves ; and their importance will rise with their utility, until they gradually throw off the badges of slavery, and finally, and without violence, obtain a legal interest in the soil. That this consequence will follow, we the more confidently believe, as it is the avowed opinion of the most profound and acute statesmen at this moment in England, who are now earnestly recommending this measure, both from its intrinsic justice, and as the last hope of preserving the West India colonies from falling under the rising empire of the blacks. The dispassionate voice of reason, and a feeling sense of interest therefore unite their influence to persuade the people of England to inhibit this dishonourable and destructive traffic, and should your Committee be able in the smallest degree to assist the exertions of our sister Society of that country, they will have abundant matter of honest exultation, and honourable pride.

With every inducement to continued exertion in a just cause, and with flattering prospects of eventual success, we commit the general objects of our institution to your protecting care, and we congratulate you upon the past success of your efforts.

The following persons are appointed delegates to represent this society in Convention, viz.... Egbert Benson, Thomas Eddy, Rudolph Bunner, Thomas Franklin, Christopher M. Slocum, Jacob Valentine, Benjamin Clark, John Onderdonk, Adrian Hegeman, and Robert C. Cornell.

Signed on behalf of the New York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves, &c.

VALENTINE SEAMAN, 1st *V. President.*

WALTER MORTON, *Secretary.*

New York, 17th December, 1805.

The Officers of the Society for the present Year are :....

Samuel L. Mitchell, President ; Valentine Seaman, first Vice-President ; Robert Bowne, second Vice-President ; Walter Morton, Secretary ; Charles Collins, Assistant Secretary ; John Murray, jun. Treasurer ; Christopher M. Slocum, Register ; Nehemiah Allen, Chairman, and Christopher M. Slocum, Secretary of the Standing Committee ; Joshua Underhill, Chairman, and William S. Burling, Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the School ; Egbert Benson, William Johnson, Peter Jay Munro, Elisha W. King, Counsellors ; Thomas Eddy, Chairman, and William Lawrence, Secretary of the Committee of Correspondence ; John Onderdonk, Thomas Franklin, Henry Post, jun. Rudolph Bunner, Committee of Correspondence.

From the New Jersey Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery.

To the next American Convention, to be held in Philadelphia, on the 13th of First Month, 1806.

WE deem it proper to continue our annual communication, although from the imperfect representation of our several district meetings in the

present general meeting, and from the want of regular reports, we shall not have it in our power to enter much into detail.

The printed minutes of the last Convention have been duly received; the distribution whereof we hope will prove useful; and although we shall say but little in reply, to the excellent circular address, feeling our incompetency to make any considerable effort towards complying with its recommendations; yet we are deeply sensible of their intrinsic importance, more especially in regard to the education of the people of colour. On this subject we have a special committee appointed, the object of which is, to devise and mature a plan for the more effectual and general diffusion of the good to be derived from the literary, moral, and religious improvement of this people. It is with pleasure we observe, that the late law of this state, of which we transmitted a copy in our report of last year, is almost universally approved by the citizens.

Our acting committees have been instrumental in effecting the liberation of five persons within the last year, who were illegally detained in slavery. As many more cases remain under their care, which, in law and justice, are equally entitled to the rights of freedom.

In one of our districts, some progress has been made in visiting the families of blacks and people of colour, and in holding out to them such advice on the subjects of economy and morality as appeared necessary. From the partial extension of this care, salutary effects have apparently ensued.

We have appointed John Shotwell, Gershom Craft. John Griscom, William Allinson, Amos

Cooper, Paul Cooper, and Clement Hall, to represent this society in the ensuing Convention.

Signed in behalf and by direction of a general meeting of the society, held at Burlington 9th mo. (Sept.) 25, 1805.

WILLIAM GRIFFITH, *President.*

JOHN GRISCOM, *Secretary.*

Officers of the Society.

PRESIDENT.....WILLIAM GRIFFITH.

VICE-PRES.... { GERSHOM CRAFT,
WILLIAM NEWBOLD.

TREASURER.....WILLIAM COXE.

SECRETARY.....JOHN GRISCOM.

To the American Convention for promoting the Abolition of Slavery.

WE acknowledge the receipt of your communication of last year, and feel great pleasure in observing the attention with which you have conducted the various objects of your establishment. It is, however, a subject of serious regret, that these annual associations have of latter years been destitute of representatives from those states wherein the evil which we desire to eradicate most extensively prevails.

We are aware that exertions have not been wanting on your part to arouse the dormant spirit of the friends of enslaved fellow-men, but those exertions have proved unavailing. To what is this

to be attributed? Is it that the cause has been deserted by its former advocates? This supposition would involve the charge of a dereliction of principle on the part of some of the worthiest members of society, and we are therefore disposed to search for other motives in excuse for this apparent apathy.

We believe the true reason why ostensible and public measures are not pursued by the advocates of abolition in the southern states, will be found in a pretty general impression, that it would not, under existing circumstances, and in the present temper of the public mind, be expedient and useful. The extreme unpopularity of all combined attempts, has therefore introduced the substitute of individual interference, as particular urgencies require. Perhaps it may be questioned, whether, all things considered, this plan, aided by the gradual change in the public sentiment which may reasonably be expected, and unopposed by the clamour which a more systematic course would invite, may not be the most eligible. But however this may be, we apprehend it will be an enquiry well deserving your attention, whether, taking into view the improbability of obtaining a revival of the southern societies, and the state of those parts of our country, on which the measures of the Convention can, without their assistance, be expected to operate, any material injury would arise from a temporary suspension of your functions, and whether the expense which is incurred by your sittings, might not be more usefully applied to other interesting objects. Having thus introduced the matter to your notice, we do not wish to press it further, and shall cheerfully acquiesce in the conclusion to which your fuller consideration of it may lead.

In our several former addresses, we have communicated all the information in our power, on the different points to which you have directed our attention.

The education of the children of the people of colour, continues to engage our solicitude and care.

In the prosecution of our endeavours, we meet with much encouragement, as well from the progress of our pupils in literary improvements, as from the co-operation of the respectable part of the free people of colour. Sensible in themselves of the inconveniencies arising from the want of education, they are anxious to avert the same misfortune from their offspring, and we trust the blessing of Providence will attend their well-meant endeavours. With regard to the moral improvement of those of the blacks who reside in the city and its vicinity, we wish it were in our power to give a more favourable account, but although there are not wanting many examples among them, of sobriety and decency of deportment, and great industry in their avocations, yet it is to be lamented, that the love of pleasure is most injuriously prevalent among a considerable class, and that the idleness and vice which are its concomitants, make them very often the subjects of our penal laws. The constant influx of numbers who have been before without any means of intellectual or moral improvement, greatly increases this evil; and it is a circumstance as disgraceful to the promoters of slavery, as it is encouraging to our labours, that a marked difference of character is observable between such as have and such as have not been favoured with these advantages.

The prosecutions against vessels and persons engaged in the slave-trade, which we mentioned to you formerly, are yet depending. We hope they will speedily be brought to a conclusion.

Although we have reason to believe that the practice of kidnapping has not wholly ceased, we have knowledge of no such recent well-authenticated instances as merit a recital.

Your addresses to the free blacks and people of colour, have been well received, and our meetings with them have been conducted with solemnity and decorum.

We conclude with informing you, that we have appointed Timothy Paxson, George Williams, Benjamin Williams, Thomas P. Cope, Jacob S. Waln, jun. Joseph R. Jenks, and Isaac T. Hopper, to represent us in the Convention this year, and we desire you to accept our earnest wishes, that your deliberations may be conducted with their usual harmony, and result in much good to the unhappy objects of our care.

Signed on behalf of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, &c.

Philadelphia, 1st mo. 6th, 1806.

THOMAS PARKER, *V. President.*

ATTEST,
JOHN BACON, SECRETARY.

The Officers of the Society for the present Year are :....

PRESIDENT.....DOCTOR BENJAMIN RUSH.

**VICE-PRES.... { ROBERT PATTERSON,
THOMAS PARKER**

**SECRETARIES... { JOHN BACON,
BENJAMIN WILLIAMS.**

TREASURER.....JOHN EVANS.

COUNSELLORS.

William Lewis,	John R. Coates,
William Rawle,	Daniel Smith,
John Hallowell,	George Fisher,
Walter Franklin,	George Vaux,
James Milnor,	Jacob S. Walm, jun.
Joseph Hopkinson,	Walker Reed.
Joseph Hemphill,	

ELECTING COMMITTEE.

Thomas Harrison,	Isaac Tatem Hopper,
Joseph Moore,	William Master,
Thomas Rogers,	Hanson Waters,
Isaac Pearson,	Edmund Kinsey,
Joseph Price,	Abraham Hilyard,
Samuel Smith,	Charles Townsend.

*To the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition
of Slavery, and Improving the Condition of the African
Race.*

WE have received and read, with deep interest, your last circular address. The happy effects which you mention as the result of the labours of some societies, particularly in the advancement of the literary education of persons of colour, is

grateful to our hearts, and gives us encouragement to proceed in similar toils.

Mankind need continual incitements to the performance of their social duties : when we meet difficulties and troubles in the accomplishment of those plans of benevolence which do not immediately concern our personal welfare, we are too apt to wax cold ; but we hope there is not one man, within the limits of our societies, before whose heart and understanding your appeals will pass unheeded. We hope there is no one whom they will not rouse to new tasks of goodness....in whose bosom they will not rekindle the expiring flame of benevolence.

Although particular circumstances have occasioned our society to be less active, during the last three months, than formerly, yet we have not been altogether inattentive to the objects of our association. We have circulated through the several counties of this state, petitions for the gradual abolition of slavery, which, when signed, are to be forwarded to our Legislature now in session : we confess, notwithstanding our efforts in this cause, we have scarcely any hope that our request will receive a favourable reply. There always has been a majority of the members of our Legislature slave-holders, or so closely connected with the enemies of African liberty, that our petitions have never obtained a friendly or deliberate consideration. We fear this hostile spirit will not speedily subside.

The literary education of persons of colour has been the subject of our continued attention. We procured a suitable Tutor, who held a school, during the First-day afternoons of the summer and

fall, for all those who pleased to attend it. We have the satisfaction to observe, that his time, and our money, were not uselessly expended. Several children, and some grown persons made very considerable progress in the first branches of knowledge. Some of them read and write well.... We believe the school-education of those unfortunate people is a matter of primary importance, because we know, when the mental powers are left to the operations of merely accidental cultivation, they more generally deviate into error, than rise through the mists of prejudice and passion to the light of truth.

We hope the moral and religious education of coloured persons in this state, and particularly within the borough of Wilmington, is progressing. The Africans and their descendants, in this town, with the pecuniary aid of their white brethren, have erected a spacious stone house for public worship. They hold regular meetings on first-days, and as far as we have yet learned, conduct themselves soberly. We believe their concentration in the form of a religious society, will occasion some improvement in their practice of the social and moral duties.

In conformity with your advice, we appointed a committee from our society, to hold a conference with them. That committee has reported a compliance with their appointment, and informed us that the result was very satisfactory to themselves. The meeting was held in the African worship-house. Your addresses of 1804 and 1805 were read, and such observations as circumstances required, were made on their various topics. The necessity of placing out their children as apprentices, to suitable tradesmen or farmers; and also

the solemn duty of having their marriage ceremonies legally performed, and faithfully adhering to them, were repeatedly and strongly enforced. Those subjects cannot be brought too frequently before them.

One slave has been manumitted, since our last report, by the aid of members of our society.

It is expected that suits will be instituted against William Goldsborough, William Reynolds, sen. and Henry Neal, for an attempt to kidnap Leven Carney, a free man of colour. This society has made enquiry in the matter, and is impressed with a belief that those persons intended to kidnap, and we hope to collect sufficient evidence to convict them legally of the crime. If our endeavours should be successful, we shall, in our next report, furnish you with a circumstantial history of the case.

But while we are combatting on the side of mercy and justice, we have to lament, that the people of South Carolina continue opposed to our cause. The friends of bleeding Africa were consoled, for two years, with a hope that the legislature of that state would be so far influenced by principles of humanity, or by the indignant feelings of the citizens of other states, or by correct views of their own interests, as to revoke the law which authorizes their trade in the flesh and blood of their fellow-men. But alas! in violation of the best sentiments of the human heart, in defiance of all that is honourable or dignified amongst rational and moral beings, the legislature of that ill-fated state has decreed that its citizens shall be permitted to continue their system of plunder, desolation, and murder, against the defenceless and innocent Africans! Can any

thing be done to save those unhappy people from the fangs of the wolves and the tygers which our countrymen are sending amongst them? Would it not be useful to stigmatize their odious traffic by publishing in the newspapers of all the northern states, the names of the traders in human blood, and the number of slaves annually imported by them? Would it not be wise to petition Congress to pass a law exacting a duty of ten dollars for each slave imported, and by a proper preamble marking the trade with the strongest language of abhorrence? We propose these serious subjects for your consideration.

The suit mentioned in our last report, as continued for further evidence, has been discontinued in consequence of the elopement of the principal witness.

We have placed in the hands of our delegates fifty dollars, which we have directed them to pay to the Treasurer of the Convention, towards the establishment of a general fund. If our treasury were rich, we should have transmitted a larger sum; but we must be content to regulate our benevolent feelings by the limits of our means.

We have appointed William Pryce, Cyrus Newlin, Joseph Bringhurst, jun. and Allen M'Lane, to represent us in the next Convention.

The following are the present Officers of our Society:...

PRESIDENT.....WILLIAM PRYCE,
 VICE-PRES.....ALLEN M'LANE,
 TREASURER.....WILLIAM SEAL,
 SECRETARY.....JOSHUA PIERCE.

ACTING COMMITTEE.

Cyrus Newlin,
Jacob Alrich,

|| William Poole,
|| Isaac H. Starr.

With sincere desires for the prosperity of the cause in which you are engaged, we are your friends and fellow-labourers.

Signed by order of the Abolition Society of Delaware.

WILLIAM PRYCE, *President.*

JOSHUA PEIRCE, *Secretary.*

Wilmington, 1st mo. 8th, 1806.

Providence, First Month 2d, 1806.

To the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, &c.

ESTEEMED FRIENDS,

WE duly received the printed copies of the minutes of your proceedings last year, with your address to the people of colour, and that to this society. The observations, the advices, and the information therein, being pertinent and interesting, are to our satisfaction, and we hope may excite renewed attention to the objects of our benevolent institutions. However desirable it would be to us to have a personal representation at your next meeting, we must submit to circumstances which at present seem not to promise that satisfaction. It appears, therefore, the more necessary that we take this method to convey to you more

fully some ideas which we just hinted in our letter last year to your standing committee.

The act of Congress of 1800, relative to the slave-trade, by section 1st, gives the whole forfeiture of the vessel to the person complaining; under which, by the owners complaining of themselves, through any of their friends, they elude the law, subjecting themselves merely to an inconsiderable expense. By section 2d and 3d, of the same act, the crime of being employed on board our own, or foreign vessels, is liable to be prosecuted only by indictment, and as in all criminal cases or prosecutions, it is necessary to have witnesses personally present, conviction is thereby rendered extremely difficult, and often impracticable, by reason of the witnesses being at a distance, and often sailors who cannot be detained on shore to wait the trial. Whereas, had the sanction been a pecuniary penalty, recoverable in a civil action, written evidence would have been admitted, and much more easily obtained and perpetrated.

We would suggest to the consideration of the Convention the propriety of an application to Congress for such an alteration of the law as to cause some part of the forfeiture to go to the United States in all cases, and to facilitate the procuring of evidence as aforesaid; and whether a further penalty excluding from all office under Congress, or the United States, those who shall in any way be concerned in the trade, be not eligible. If the Convention should judge proper to make any application, either publicly, or more privately through some of the members, for any or all these alterations, we shall be willing to unite, by addressing our members to unite their influence to effect the same. They, in answer to our application by let

ter ast year on the subject of the Louisiana petition for a repeal of the act prohibiting the importation of slaves into that territory, gave us satisfaction in their cordially uniting with us, and information, that in their opinions, there were not ten members in Congress who would countenance the petition in that respect.

We have appointed a committee for the purpose of collecting essays and tracts relative to the history of the rise and progress, and present state of slavery in the United States, which the Convention have in view to have published, and directed them to correspond with your Acting Committee thereon, if occasion requires, and to report progress.

Subscriptions have been made to raise funds for opening an evening school for the people of colour in this town and vicinity, of all descriptions who choose to attend during the winter, and we have appointed a committee to make application to the town of Providence, to extend their benevolent plan of education of the whites at public expence to the people of colour.

We are not without apprehension that there has been too much relaxation in regard to publishing tracts and essays on the impolicy and injustice of slavery, and that its tendency has been to lessen that repugnance in the public mind, especially of the young and rising generation, which ought to be kept up by every proper means, to do away the enormous evil. Attempts have been made by interested people to propagate the erroneous notion that the blacks are absolutely a different species from the whites; but whenever this has been brought to public view, it has been successfully

opposed by the advocates of the doctrine that "He that giveth life and breath, and all things, hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth," to the refutation of that notion so contrary to this Christian doctrine and true philosophy.

We are your friends.

Signed in behalf of said society, by

DAVID HOWELL, *President.*

The following persons are appointed a Committee of Arrangement, to wit, John Onderdonk, Timothy Paxson, John Griscom, William Pryce; to whom the preceding communications are referred, to consider and report thereon. The committee is also instructed to inquire into and make report on such other subjects as may be deemed proper for the consideration of this Convention.

A communication from Peter Williams jun. a person of colour, dated New-York, January 6th, 1806, was received, read, and ordered to lay on the table.

The following persons were appointed a Committee to examine the Treasurer's Account, and make report thereon; to wit, Jacob Valentine and William Allinson.

Then adjourned till to-morrow afternoon at 4 o'clock.

January 14th, 4 o'clock P. M.

Convention met, pursuant to adjournment ;

MEMBERS PRESENT :

GERSHOM CRAFT....PRESIDENT.

Christopher M. Slocum,	George Williams,
Jacob Valentine,	Benjamin Williams,
John Onderdonk,	Thomas P. Cope,
Adrian Hegeman,	Jacob S. Waln, jun.
Robert C. Cornell,	Joseph R. Jenks,
John Griscom,	Isaac T. Hopper,
William Allinson,	Joseph Bringhamst, jun.
Amos Cooper,	Cyrus Newlin,
Paul Cooper,	William Pryce,
Timothy Paxson,	Allen M-Lane.

The minutes of the Acting Committee were read and approved.

The Committee of Arrangement makes the following report :....

The Committee to whom was referred the Addresses from the several Abolition Societies,

REPORT, that after deliberately considering the several communications submitted to them, they agree to propose,

1st, That a committee consisting of one delegate from each society be appointed to prepare the draft of a circular address to the abolition societies in the United States.

2d, That it be recommended to the respective societies, in their separate capacities, to endeavour, as far as may be in their power, to extend such

aid to our brethren in the southern states as they may want, in the prosecution of our views; and that they use all suitable means for procuring agents in those parts, for the purpose of bringing to justice persons who have in any way incurred the penalties of the laws against slavery and the slave-trade.

3d, That the subject of education be again earnestly recommended, particularly as it relates to the moral culture of the blacks; and as a powerful means of promoting this important object, that suitable advice be frequently administered to them in their families and in larger assemblies convened for that purpose.

4th, That the proposition from Rhode Island, relative to an alteration in the slave laws, be taken into consideration by the Convention.

5th, That the first section of the third article of the Constitution be altered, so as to stand as follows:....The Convention shall meet triennially at Philadelphia on the second Monday in January.

Signed by order of the Committee,

JOHN ONDERDONK, *Chairman.*

The Committee appointed to examine the Treasurer's Account, report, they have considered and found it correct.

Resolved, that the report of the Committee of Arrangement be read by paragraphs.

The first paragraph thereof was read and approved.

The second was read, and adopted.

The third and fourth were also adopted.

The fifth was adopted unanimously, with this addition, that the Constitution of this Convention be conformable thereto.

Resolved, that the several abolition societies in the United States be earnestly requested to prepare and circulate memorials among the friends of emancipation for their signatures, soliciting the enactment of a law for prohibiting the importation of slaves into the United States after the year 1807; and that the same be presented to Congress at their session in that year.

On motion resolved, that a committee consisting of one delegate from each society represented in this Convention be appointed to draft a circular address, and that the second and third propositions of the report of the Committee of Arrangement, and the preceding resolution respecting the memorial to Congress, be referred to the same committee. The following persons are appointed:....Adrian Hegeman, William Allinson, Joseph Brighurst, jun. and Thomas P. Cope.

Resolved, that the fourth proposition of the report of the Committee of Arrangement be referred to Thomas P. Cope, Timothy Paxson, and Jacob S. Waln, jun. to report by memorial or otherwise.

The Convention proceeded to the appointment of the Acting Committee for the ensuing three years.

New York....John Onderdonk. New Jersey....
 John Griscom. Pennsylvania....Thomas P. Cope,
 Joseph R. Jenks, Timothy Paxson, Jacob S. Waln,
 jun. Delaware....Joseph Bringhurst, jun.

Adjourned till to-morrow afternoon at 4 o'clock.

January 15th, 4 o'clock P. M.

Convention met, pursuant to adjournment ;

MEMBERS PRESENT :

GERSHOM CRAFT, PRESIDENT.

Christopher M. Slocum,	George Williams,
Jacob Valentine,	Benjamin Williams,
John Onderdonk,	Thomas P. Cope,
Adrian Hegeman,	Jacob S. Waln, jun.
Robert C. Cornell,	Isaac T. Hopper,
John Griscom,	Joseph Bringhurst, jun.
William Allinson,	William Pryce,
Amos Cooper,	Cyrus Newlin,
Paul Cooper,	Joseph R. Jenks.
Timothy Paxson,	

A communication was received from John Shotwell, informing the Convention of his inability to meet them.

The Committee on the Circular Address made a report, which was read and approved, as follows :

*To the.....Society for promoting the Abolition of
 Slavery.*

IN pursuance of the practice of former Conventions, and in obedience to the dictates of our own feelings, we affectionately salute you.

In the course of our deliberations on the impressive subjects submitted to our consideration, it has been thought advisable to recommend that you endeavour to establish agencies among the friends of emancipation in the southern states, in order to obtain correct and early information of persons who incur the penalties of the laws respecting slavery, and that you have prompt and sufficient aid in prosecuting of such offenders.

We learn with deep regret, that, independent of the cruel practice of kidnapping, a clandestine traffic in the human species is prosecuted to a considerable extent, by the citizens of one of the eastern states. Some of the wretched subjects of this commerce are conveyed to the southward, and there sold. The establishment therefore of a correspondence with suitable persons, whose business it should be to acquire and communicate intelligence respecting the authors and abettors of these transactions would probably be the means of bringing some of them to justice.

Repeatedly and earnestly as we have recommended the subject of education to your attention, we cannot forbear renewing the interesting call. Much has been done, yet much remains to be accomplished; and 'tis in vain that you extend the boon of freedom to the slave, unless you qualify him to become useful to himself, his family, and his country.

As the period is not far distant when Congress may constitutionally prohibit the further importation of slaves, we recommend that you pursue timely measures for addressing them by petition and otherwise, requesting them to pass such laws as shall effectually put an end to the inhuman commerce.

You will perceive by our minutes that we have judged it expedient so to modify the Constitution as to make our stated meetings triennial. Should special meetings be at any time deemed necessary, the means for calling them are provided by the Constitution. We trust, however, that this alteration will not produce any abatement of your zeal; your work is not finished; nearly one fifth of the nation drag the galling chain of slavery, and look up to the friends of emancipation, for liberty and protection. There is therefore a vast field yet open for the exercise of your humanity; and we intreat you by the love of justice....by the endearing ties of fellowship....by the sacred precepts of Christianity....that you abandon not the cause, until the rulers of the land shall practice what they teach, that they "hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights: that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The committee appointed to consider the proposition from the Providence Society, presented the following memorial, which was read, adopted, and directed to be signed and attested by the President and Secretary, and forwarded to Congress by the Acting Committee.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.

IT is to us a subject of deep regret that circumstances once more command an address to you in the language of solicitation. In thus calling your attention from objects of importance to those which may perhaps be deemed of inferior moment,

we are not actuated by an ignoble passion for renown....far otherwise. We are perfectly content to pass down the stream of time unnoticed by the world, unrewarded by celebrity. If the purposes which we hold up to view for attainment, are but accomplished, entire satisfaction will be ours, though fame records not our actions. The existence of vice, and a wish to eradicate it, have alone drawn us from the obscurity of private life.

Sources of affliction still force themselves upon the feelings of your memorialists in viewing the land of their nativity and affection. Though the horizon in some places has resumed its native lustre, dark clouds intercept its splendour in others. We still hear the clanking fetters of slavery in the dominions of liberty; and we hear them with increasing noise. That the cause of this injurious change should be legalized, we can but lament. We ask not the interposition of Congress: though it is believed to be within their inclination, we know it is beyond their power. The object of this memorial is the removal of other evils.

Eminence in the slave-trade has long disgracefully distinguished a number of the citizens of an eastern state. Regardless of their own or their country's reputation, they have long been the inhuman forgers of chains for the sons of Africa. By their means the American flag still continues to flutter on an insulted territory, the witness of the greatest enormities. Parents are torn from children; husbands from wives: in a word, thousands of freemen are annually dragged into slavery, through the instrumentality of the vessels, the citizens, and the produce of the United States. And this too in undisguised contravention of the laws of their country! To one of the practices to

which the African traders of the place alluded to have resorted for escaping even a chance of punishment, we beg leave to call the attention of the wisdom of the Union. We say chance of punishment; for he who there dares to step forward to assert the laws of the land, hazards his life.

It is declared in the first section of an Act of Congress passed May 10, 1800, unlawful for any citizen of the United States, or other person residing within the United States, directly or indirectly to hold any right or property in any vessel employed in the transportation of slaves from one foreign country to another; and any right or property belonging as aforesaid, shall be forfeited, and may be libelled and condemned for the use of the person who shall sue for the same, &c. Under this act, giving the whole forfeiture to the informer, the vessels of those who incur its penalties are libelled and condemned by collusion with their friends. The defendants, by this mockery of justice, purge their vessels from crime, subjecting themselves merely to an inconsiderable expense. From unquestionable authority we are assured of several evasions of this description. To prevent them, and strengthen the provisions of the acts generally upon the subject of the slave-trade, we would suggest to Congress the propriety of such an alteration in the law as to entitle the United States in all cases to a proportion of the condemned article; and annexing to the persons engaged in this traffic (since shame is a powerful motive to action) a disqualification to hold any office under the United States.

Your memorialists would further suggest another alteration of the penal code. By the same law of 1800, voluntarily serving on board vessels em-

ployed in the transportation of slaves from one foreign country to another, is declared unlawful. The punishment of this offence is directed to be by indictment. By the existing law, criminal prosecutions can only be supported, with some few exceptions, by *viva voce* testimony. The accused upon the trial must be confronted by the witnesses against him. To seamen the knowledge of infractions of the part of the law last alluded to, is usually confined. Persons whose avocations constantly lead them from their homes to distant places; and whose attendance at trials it is of course generally impossible to secure, without subjecting them to the palpable injustice of confinement, or an inconvenience equally great, that of compelling by surety their presence at a particular day; on which, unexpectedly, and unavoidably, they may be hundreds of miles from the scene of trial. This difficulty it is apprehended would be obviated by removing, from written testimony, the objection to which it is now liable in criminal prosecutions, under the law of 1800, and giving it in such cases the force which it possesses in civil actions. We have not been able to discover any objection to depositions fairly taken in the presence of prosecutor and prosecuted. It is, however, with great deference submitted to the superior judgment of Congress.

We hope that in thus concisely urging upon your notice some apprehended defects in the laws for the discouragement of the worst of crimes, impertinence will not be discoverable. Though the prospect is brightening on the eye of humanity, though the period rapidly advances, in which Congress will acquire a capacity of performing by a single unexpensive act, more good than perhaps ever fell to the lot of a legislature to accomplish,

we have not, hence, conceived ourselves at liberty to view with inactive zeal present excesses, to remedy which a competent authority exists.

Resolved, that the Acting Committee be instructed to convey to William Wilberforce, member of the British Parliament, the high esteem which this Convention entertains for his character, and its thanks for his long, persevering, and benevolent endeavours to obtain an abolition of the traffic in slaves.

Resolved by the Convention unanimously, that, in addition to the provision in the sixth article of the Constitution, for the calling of special meetings of the Convention, the Acting Committee be authorized to call such meetings in cases of emergency.

On motion, resolved, that the Acting Committee have printed six hundred copies of the Minutes of this Convention, and as many as they shall judge necessary of the Circular Address; and that they have them transmitted in the usual proportions to the different Abolition Societies.

Resolved, that the Acting Committee present the thanks of this Convention to the President of the Select Council of the city of Philadelphia, for the use of their chamber during this session.

Resolved, that said Committee be directed to give the several Abolition Societies three months previous notice of the time of meeting of the Convention, and that they request each society to en-

join its delegates to attend the meetings thereof, during the whole session.

Resolved, that such of the acts of the legislatures of the eastern states, on the subject of slavery, as are contained in a pamphlet received in the year from the Providence Society for the Abolition of Slavery, and have not hitherto been published by order of the Convention, be published with the Minutes of the proceedings of the Convention of this year, in the manner which may be deemed most proper by the Acting Committee.

Adjourned sine die.

Published by order of the Convention,

JACOB S. WALN, Jun. SEC'RY.

Philadelphia, January 15th, 1806.

THE END

APPENDIX.

The following is the Communication received from
Peter Williams, jun. referred to in the preceding
Minutes.

*To the Convention of Delegates from the different Abolition
Societies in the United States, to be held in Philadelphia
the 13th of January, 1806.*

THE indefatigable zeal of the Abolition Society, in liberating from bondage an oppressed people, and the means which they have made use of to promote their happiness, highly merit the grateful acknowledgement of the African race, and the approbation of every candid discerning mind. The influence which they have had in ameliorating our distresses, and redressing the injuries done us, is obvious, on a review of the deplorable situation to which we were reduced by those whose insatiate thirst for sordid gold, superseding every other consideration, rendered them insensible to the feelings of human nature. Torn from our families, our friends, and from all we held most dear, we were dragged to a distant, and inhospitable shore, and there doomed to wear out a miserable existence in the service of cruel and imperious masters, in whose estimation we were merely as beasts of burthen, destined by fate to a state of slavery. In this abject, and forlorn condition, stimulated alone by the scourge to excessive labour; worn down by fatigue, without enjoying the necessaries of life; held in contempt, as a degradation to the hu-

man species ; enveloped in ignorance, by the base policy of our tyrants, and deprived of hope in so wretched a condition ; we oft called to remembrance our native land, and with deep regret mourned the loss of those darling comforts which endear life to man, and in paroxysms of rage were ready to curse the hour which severed us from happiness, and placed us under the dominion of men who delight in the sufferings of their fellow-creatures. But ere long that humanity which is so conspicuous in the character of the FRIENDS, interposed in our behalf ; they, with other humane men, of different denominations, saw, and sympathized in our sorrows, and rising above the mean prejudices imbibed against us, united their efforts in order to rescue from slavery and misery the unfortunate sons of Africa. Innumerable were the obstacles opposed to this plan by self-interested men ; but in despite of them all, their munificence and perseverance set thousands at liberty, and are daily casting off the shackles of numbers more. Although the restoration of our liberty is an act of genuine benevolence, had their kindness extended no farther, we should again have fallen, helpless and unprotected, an easy prey to the perfidiousness of our former oppressors. Happily for us, this was not the case : happily for us, that our benefactors esteem it a pleasure, not only to gain, but to secure our freedom. When the insidious kidnapper endangers our rights, they fly to our assistance, by which means hundreds of freed men have been saved from a second bondage ; and it is through their instrumentality that equal justice is distributed to the black and the white. Launched as it were into a new element, illiterate, and inexperienced, to what dangers might we have been exposed, had we not found a guide, faithful and judicious, in these humane men. They knew full

well, that ignorance is the fosterer of vice, and that vice is the bane of happiness. With a view therefore to prevent these evil consequences, and elevate us to a state of respectability in society, they inculcated by precept and example, the lessons of morality, industry, and economy; and the better to promote their laudable designs, they erected schools to enlighten our minds by the genial rays of literature. To one of these institutions I am indebted for my education, which, though not great, is sufficient to convince me of its great utility. The result of these measures afford a scene worthy the contemplation of a philosophic mind, which must behold with pleasing transport, the African race emerging from complicated misery, to the full enjoyments of civilized life; the beams of literature dispersing the clouds of ignorance, and the gradual discardment of the illiberal opinions entertained against part of the human family. Notwithstanding I regret that many, too many, freed men, have unhappily fallen victims to vice; yet we behold their number surpassed by those who uphold respectable stations in life, and far surpassed by those whose frugality and integrity have ranked them in society as useful men: we behold also numbers instructed in the rudiments of learning, and some who already tread the flowery paths of science; while, in all classes of society we behold numerous countenances assuming a friendly aspect towards us. From this pleasing prospect, may I not anticipate a time when posterity shall set at nought all distinctions between the inalienable rights of black men, and white. Hence it may easily be discovered that we have reaped infinite advantages from the Abolition Society, for which, gratitude loudly demands an acknowledgement. In the name, therefore, of my fellow-countrymen, and in behalf of myself, I return you thanks, ye venerable, ye phi-

lanthropic men, for espousing the cause of an injured, an oppressed, and a despised race, and for all the benefits and advantages we have derived from your unabating zeal and good will towards us.

PETER WILLIAMS, Jun.

New York, January 6th, 1806.

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.
June Session, 1774.

An Act Prohibiting the Importation of Negroes into this Colony.

WHEREAS the inhabitants of America are generally engaged in the preservation of their own rights and liberties, among which that of personal freedom must be considered as the greatest; and as those who are desirous of enjoying all the advantages of liberty themselves, should be willing to extend personal liberty to others:

Therefore be it enacted by this General Assembly, and by the authority thereof it is enacted, That for the future no negro or mulatto slave shall be brought into this colony: And in case any slave shall hereafter be brought in, he or she shall be and are hereby rendered immediately free, so far as respects personal freedom and the enjoyment of private property, in the same manner as the native Indians.

Provided nevertheless, That this law shall not extend to servants of persons travelling through this colony, who are not inhabitants thereof, and who carry them out with them when they leave the same.

Provided also, That nothing in this act shall extend, or be deemed to extend, to any negro or mulatto slave, belonging to any inhabitant of either of the British colonies, islands or plantations, who shall come into this colony with an intention to settle or reside for a number of years therein; but such negro or mulatto, so brought into this colony by such person inclining to settle or reside therein, shall be and remain in the same situation, and subject in like manner to their master or mistress, as they were in the colony or plantation from whence they removed.

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.
October Session, 1779.

An Act Prohibiting Slaves being Sold out of the State against their Consent.

WHEREAS tolerating strangers to purchase negro or mulatto slaves in this state, and carry them off either by land or water against their consent, to perpetuate their slavery in foreign parts, remote from their friends and acquaintance, is against the rights of human nature, and tends greatly to aggravate the condition of slavery, which this General Assembly is disposed rather to alleviate, till some favourable occasion may offer for its total abolition: *Be it therefore enacted by this General Assembly, and by the authority thereof, that if it is enacted*, That in case any stranger or foreigner, or any person or persons whoever, shall presume to purchase, and in consequence of such recent title, or of any other right, title or claim whatsoever, shall forcibly or fraudulently attempt to carry off, either by land or water, out of the

bounds and jurisdiction of this state, against their consent, any negro or mulatto slave or slaves heretofore residing in this state, such attempt shall operate against the person or persons making the same, either by themselves or any other person or persons acting under them, and in their behalf, to a total defeazance and forfeiture of all their right, title or claim, to such slave or slaves.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That upon its being alledged and proved by such slave or slaves, or any other person in his or their behalf, before any one Justice of the Peace in this state, that such an attempt hath been made as aforesaid, it shall be in the power and become the duty of such Justice forthwith to give under his hand and seal, to such slave or slaves, a certificate of his or their total emancipation; by virtue of which, such slave or slaves shall become forever thereafter as perfectly liberated from the power of the persons concerned in such attempt, as though he or they had never been in bondage.

And lest the said slaves should by fraud, threats or duress, be prevailed upon hastily to declare their consent to such sale and exportation, when at the same time, in truth and reality, entirely averse thereto, *Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,* That nothing shall be deemed sufficient evidence of such their consent, but a certificate, signed by two or more Justices of the Peace, in the town where such slave or slaves may reside, to the following purport, *to wit:*

We the subscribers, Justices of the Peace in the town of in the county of and state of Rhode Island and Providence plantations, do hereby certify all persons whom it may concern,

that, a slave, about years of age, heretofore belonging to, and usually serving in this town, hath appeared before us at two several times, three days asunder, in the absence of owner, and, under no apparent restraint or duress, ha h fully at each time declared consent to be sold to, of the state of, in the county of, and town of, and to be forthwith carried to said town to reside with the said in a state of slavery. Witness our hands. Dated this day of, in the year of our Lord

Provided always, That in case any negro or mulatto slave shall become notoriously unfaithful and villainous, and the owner or owners thereof shall alledge and make proof of the same, at the General Sessions of the Peace, in the county where such slave or slaves reside, and obtain judgment against him or them, it shall and may be lawful for the owner or owners to export said delinquent slave or slaves to any place within the jurisdiction of the United States. And a copy of the said judgment, annexed to the bill of sale, shall justify his or their exportation accordingly.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no person, owner of any slave or slaves in this state, shall sell or dispose of him or them to be carried out of the state, on any pretence whatever, contrary to the true intent and meaning hereof; and that if any person or persons in this state shall be lawfully convicted of selling or disposing of any such slave or slaves, in manner as aforesaid, he or they shall forfeit and pay the sum such slave or slaves shall be valued at; the one half thereof to and for the use of this state, and the other half to and for the use of the informer

who shall prosecute the same ; to be tried and recovered before any court of law in this state proper to try the same.

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.
February Session, 1784.

An Act Authorizing the Manumission of Negroes, Mulattoes and others, and for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery.

WHEREAS all men are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and the holding mankind in a state of slavery, as private property, which has gradually obtained by unrestrained custom and the permission of the laws, is repugnant to this principle, and subversive of the happiness of mankind, the great end of all civil government :

Be it therefore enacted by this General Assembly, and by the authority thereof it is enacted, That no person or persons, whether negroes, mulattoes or others, who shall be born within the limits of this state, on or after the first day of March, A. D. 1784, shall be deemed or considered as servants for life, or slaves ; and that all servitude for life, or slavery of children, to be born as aforesaid, in consequence of the condition of their mothers, be and the same is hereby taken away, extinguished and for ever abolished.